Virtual Reference Adventure: Choose Your Own Experience

Here's a "what if" scenario to think about as you integrate information literacy into chat reference.

WHAT IF your users don't really understand the difference between Web sites and licensed databases?

Differentiating between Web sites and specialized databases is difficult for many library users. Authentication requirements are confusing and it takes time to explain why they are needed. Your manager of reference services believes that emphasizing information literacy techniques and strategies can help. The chat reference service seems an ideal way to teach effective searching, evaluation of Web resources and use of library databases.

How can you use your library's Web pages to promote information literacy?

How skilled are your chat reference providers in using co-browsing techniques to provide instruction?

How can your chat reference scripts encourage information literacy?

Here are some resources that may help you:

"Introduction to Information Literacy," ALA/Association of College and Research Libraries, 2003-2005. Available at http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitoverview/introtoinfolit/introinfolit.htm

Nielsen, Bo Gerner and Marianne Hummelshoj, " Integrating Information Literacy Issues into Virtual Reference Services," VRD conference presentation, 2003. Available at http://www.vrd.org/conferences/VRD2003/proceedings/presentation.cfm?PID=183

Sample scripts from the Washington Research Library Consortium (D.C.) are available at http://www.wrlc.org/virtualref/scripts.html